

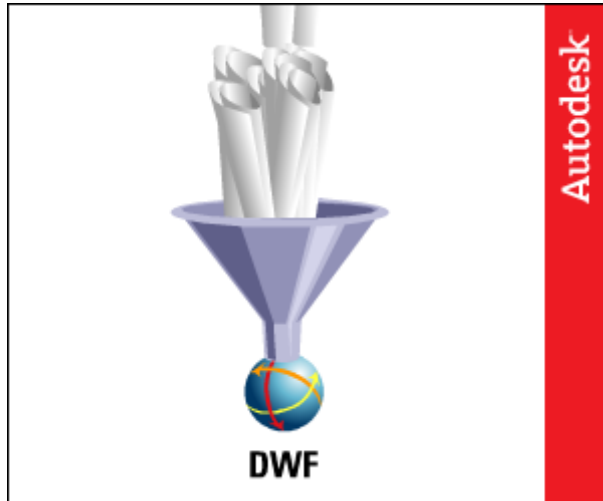
## Supreme Court Orders Town To Release Aerial Photos, Maps



Written by GISuser

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STAMFORD, Conn. -- The Connecticut Supreme Court ruled Wednesday that Greenwich must release its computer database of aerial photographs and maps, rejecting arguments that the information could be used by criminals or terrorists and would jeopardize the affluent town's privacy.



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The town maintains the images in a tightly kept database known as a geographic information system, which a Superior Court judge declared to be public records. In a unanimous ruling, the high court rejected the town's appeal of that decision.

Greenwich resident and computer consultant Stephen Whitaker had filed an appeal with the state Freedom Information Commission after the town denied his request for an electronic copy of the entire database.

Town officials have said that the uncontrolled release of detailed information on infrastructure, public safety facilities, schools and celebrities' homes in electronic form could lead to breaches in security and privacy.

Greenwich argued the records were exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act.

State Superior Court Judge Howard Owens Jr. rejected the town's argument in a Dec. 30, 2003, decision, citing lack of concrete evidence to support its claim that the materials' release presented an immediate danger to the community. The high court agreed.

"Such generalized claims of a possible safety risk do not satisfy the plaintiff's burden of proving the applicability of an exemption from disclosure under the act," the high court said.